

Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month



Kristi Tsuya Yamaguchi

Yamaguchi, Kristi Tsuya (1971-), American figure skater, winner of the 1992 ladies' figure skating Olympic gold medal. That same year she also won the world and United States figure skating titles. Yamaguchi was born in Hayward, California. Although she was born clubfooted, she was able to overcome her deformity, and she began ice skating before she was ten years old, training with coach Christy Kjarsgaard Ness. With skating partner Rudi Galindo, Yamaguchi won the junior pairs title at the U.S. Figure Skating Championships in 1986. In 1988 Yamaguchi won the singles and, with Galindo, the pairs titles at the World Junior Figure Skating Championships. The next two years, she and Galindo won the pairs title and she placed second in the singles competition at the U.S. Figure Skating Championships. From 1990 Yamaguchi concentrated on singles competition and earned international acclaim for the technical difficulty of her routines. At the 1992 Winter Olympics in Albertville, France, Yamaguchi became the first American woman since Dorothy Hamill in 1976 to win the singles gold medal. She also won both the 1991 and 1992 world championships. Her Olympic success led to several commercial endorsements and a professional figure-skating career.

